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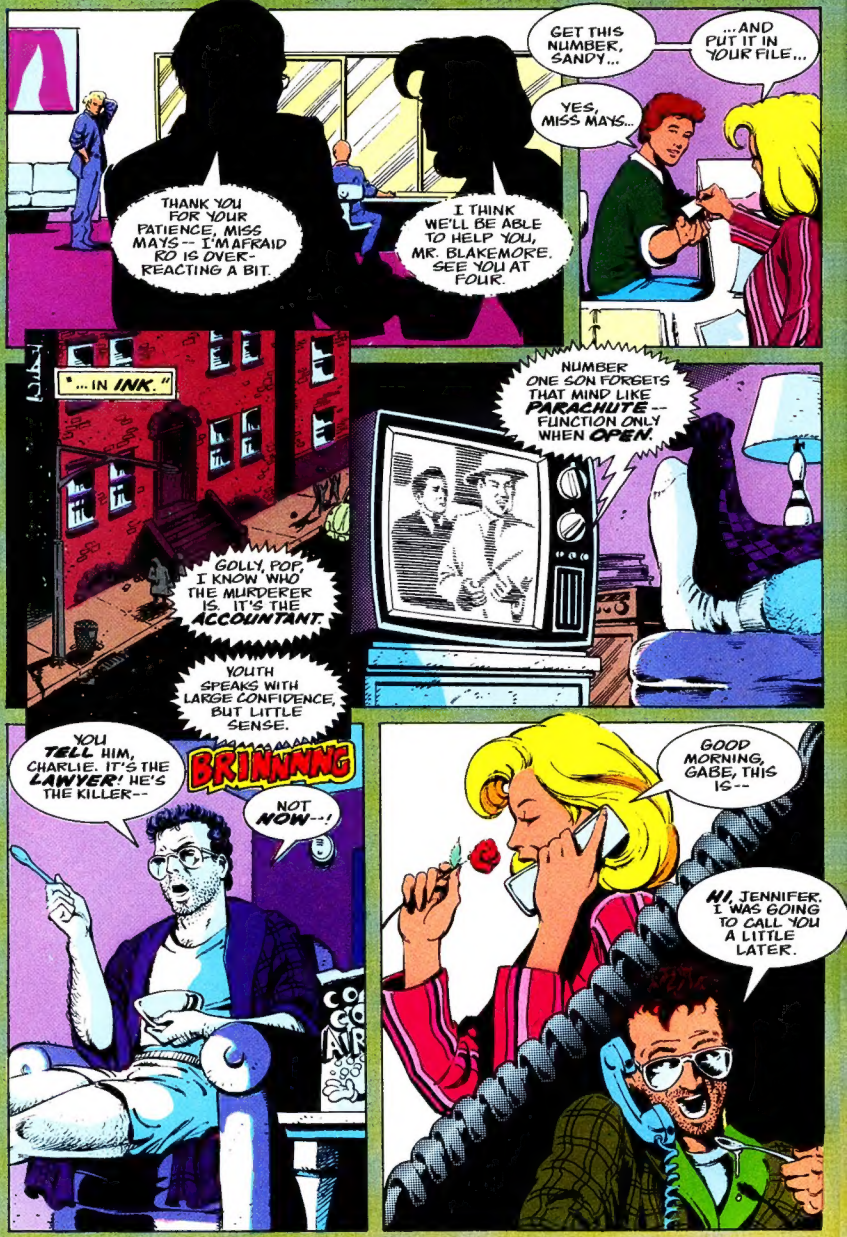
# The Adventure of the Rogue's Gallery

| MIKE W. BARR | ADAM HUGHES | RICK MAGYAR | DEBORAH MARKS | JULIA LACQUEMENT | MICHAEL EURY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Writer/Creator | Penciller | Inker | Letterer | Colorist | Editor |

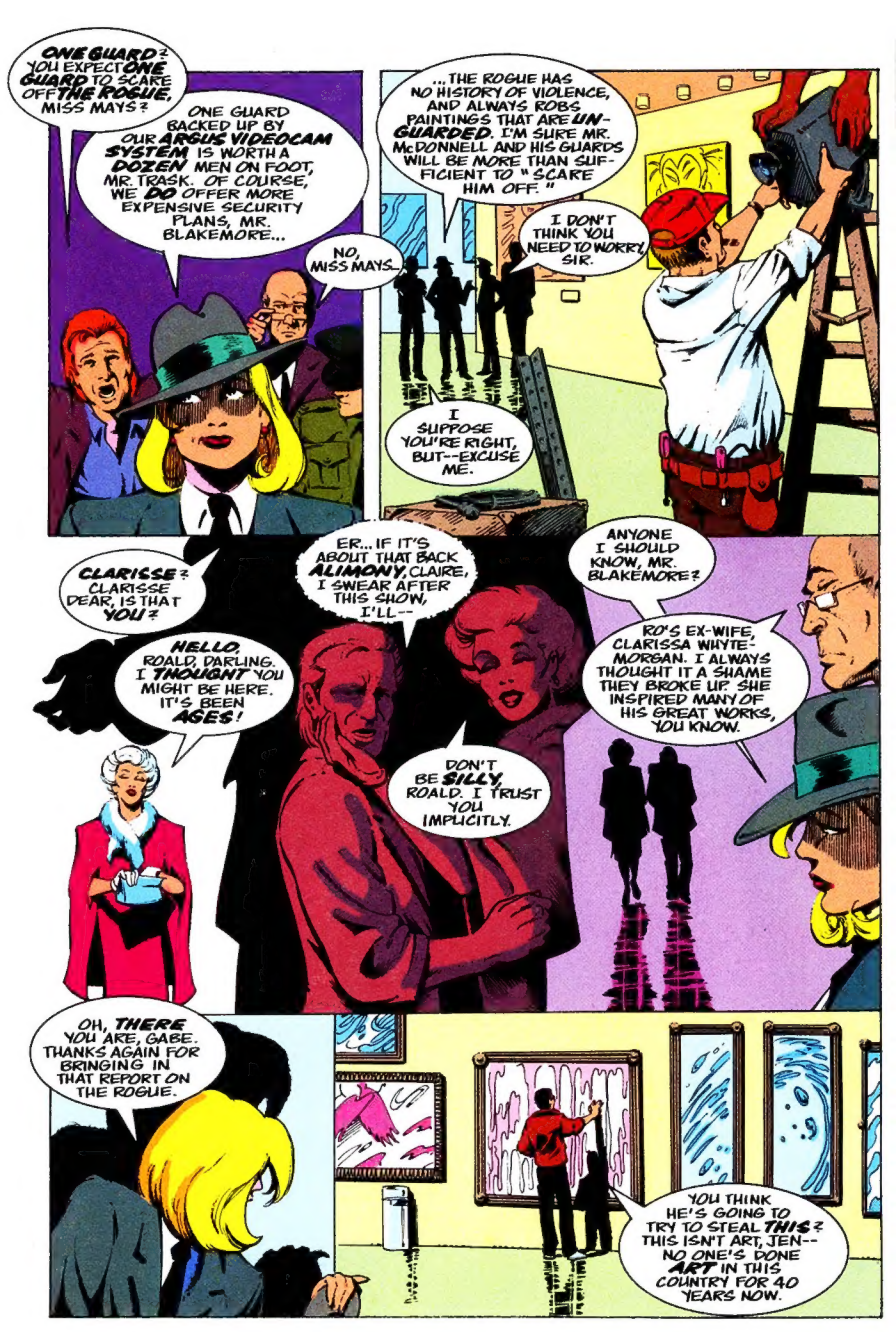
**The MAZE Agency # 1,** December 1988. Published by **COMICO The Comic Company,** 1547 DeKalb St., Norristown, PA 19401. The MAZE Agency text and illustrations are © 1988 Michael W. Barr. All other material, unless otherwise specified, is © 1988 Comico The Comic Company. The MAZE Agency, Jennifer Mays, Gabriel Webb, and all other prominent characters contained herein are registered trademarks of Michael W. Barr. All rights reserved. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons and/or institutions in this publication and those of any existing or pre-existing person or institution is intended and any similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. **The MAZE Agency** is published monthly. *Printed in Canada*

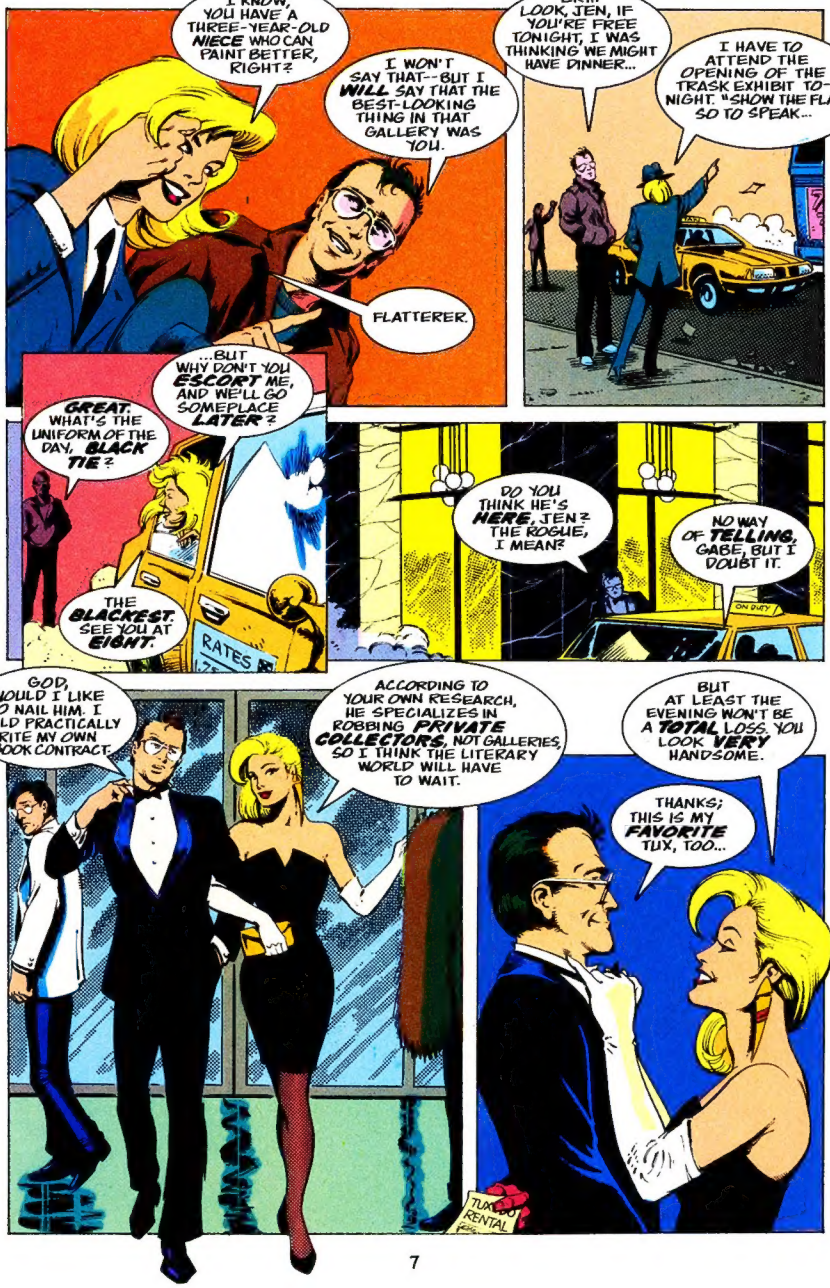
"WELL, IT'S BEEN TEN YEARS SINCE THE WORLD SAW ANY NEW WORK BY ROALD TRASK, RO... AND THAT'S TEN YEARS TOO LONG."
"I COULDN'T AGREE MORE, WIN...
...IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE WHAT THE CRITICS SAY ABOUT MY CURRENT MODE OF WORK.
I'M MORE INTERESTED IN WHAT THE CUSTOMERS THINK, RO...
...AND FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN OF YOUR WORK, I THINK I'LL BE PLEASED WITH THE--
"MR. BLAKEMORE! MR. BLAKEMORE!"
JORKINS, ARE YOU ALL--?
SIR, LOOK! IT'S HIM!
"HIM? THE ROGUE? IT CAN'T BE. NO ONE'S HEARD FROM HIM IN YEARS."
I HAVE SELECTED YOUR PAINTINGS FOR MY ROGUE'S GALLERY.
THE ROGUE
BUT WHAT IF IT IS, WINSTON...?
WHAT IF IT IS THE ROGUE, MISS MAYS?
I HAVE SELECTED YOUR PAINTINGS FOR MY ROGUE'S GALLERY.
THE ROGUE
IF IT IS, MR. TRASK...

... IT'LL NOT ONLY BE THE FIRST TIME HE'S EVER ANNOUNCED HIS TARGET IN ADVANCE, IT'LL BE HIS FIRST JOB THIS DECADE. NO ONE'S HEARD FROM HIM SINCE HIS AMSTERDAM ROBBERY IN, I BELIEVE, 1971.
EXACTLY. HE'S PICKED MY EXHIBITION TO RE-ESTABLISH HIS REPUTATION!
HE'S EVEN SENT A NOTICE TO THE NEWSPAPERS! YOU'VE GOT TO STOP HIM, MISS MAYS!
IS THE ROGUE BACK?
Threatens new trask exhibition
Gang war in L.A. Crime - Talks on
WE'VE HANDLED GALLERY SECURITY FOR YEARS, MR. TRASK...
...IN FACT, I'LL JUST HAVE OUR RECORDS SECTION PRINT OUT AN ENTIRE HISTORY OF OUR ROGUISH FRIEND NOW.
I'M SORRY, MISS MAYS, BUT THE COMPUTER'S DOWN...
YES, THIS IS MISS MAYS. I NEED A REPORT ON A THIEF KNOWN AS "THE ROGUE," PLEASE.
...WE WON'T BE ABLE TO ACCESS ANY FILES FOR HOURS.
...
YES, ONE HOUR WILL BE FINE, THANKS VERY MUCH.
BUT, MISS MAYS...
" I'LL REVIEW THE REPORT PERSONALLY, MR. BLAKEMORE, MAY I CALL AT FOUR THIS AFTERNOON TO CHECK YOUR BUILDING SECURITY? "
" I'LL BE WAITING, MISS MAYS.

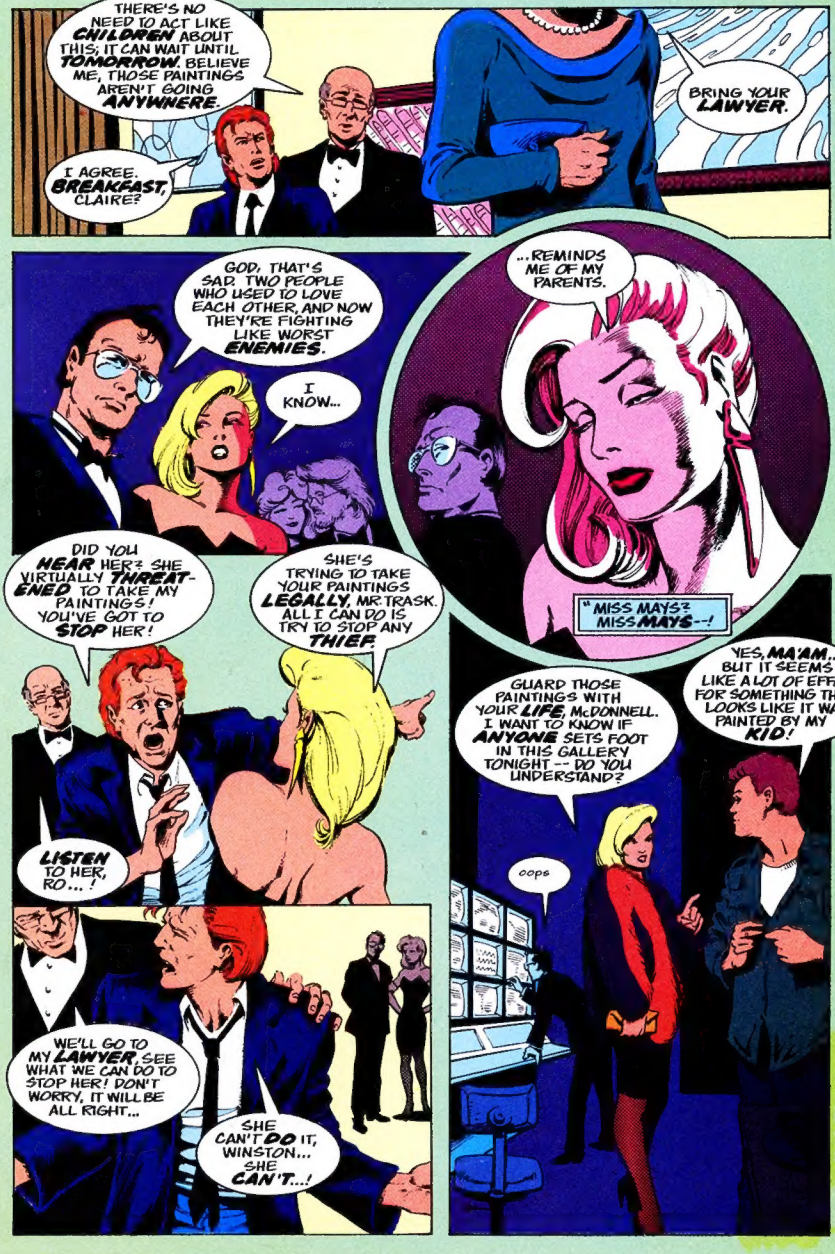

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE, MISS MAYS -- I'M AFRAID RO IS OVER-REACTING A BIT.
I THINK WE'LL BE able TO HELP YOU, MR. BLAKEMORE. SEE YOU AT FOUR.
GET THIS NUMBER, SANDY...
...AND PUT IT IN YOUR FILE...
YES, MISS MAYS...
"...IN INK."
GOLLY, POP, I KNOW WHO THE MURDERER IS. IT'S THE ACCOUNTANT.
YOUTH SPEAKS WITH LARGE CONFIDENCE, BUT LITTLE SENSE.
NUMBER ONE SON FORGETS THAT MIND LIKE PARACHUTE -- FUNCTION ONLY WHEN OPEN.
YOU TELL HIM, CHARLIE. IT'S THE LAWYER! HE'S THE KILLER--
BRINNNNG
NOT NOW--!
GOOD MORNING, GABE, THIS IS--
HI, JENNIFER. I WAS GOING TO CALL YOU A LITTLE LATER.

WELL, HOW NICE. HOWEVER, I HAVE A LITTLE PROBLEM. I NEED A REPORT, GABE, AND BY THIS AFTERNOON. CAN YOU OBLIGE ME?
NO PROBLEM, JEN...
"...I COULD USE A BREAK FROM THE ARTICLE I'M WORKING ON NOW, ANYWAY."
BLOODY TRAIL LEADS TO MAD LESBIAN KILLER By Gabriel Webb
GOOD. YOU'LL BE PAID, OF COURSE.
REAL TRUE DETECTIVE
WE CAN TALK ABOUT THAT LATER. WHAT'S THE REPORT ON?
IT'S AN OLDIE BUT A GOODIE, GABE...
...MURDERER'S IDENTITY AS PLAIN AS NOSE ON FACE...
...THE ROGUE. HE'S THREATENED TO ROB THE TRASK EXHIBITION THAT OPENS TONIGHT.
THE ROGUE? HE'S BACK? HOT DAMN!
MMMROOOWR
I'VE GOT TO BE IN ON THIS! WHEN DO YOU NEED IT?
BE HERE AT THREE, AND YOU CAN HELP WITH THE SECURITY SURVEY. 'BYE.
JOIN US AGAIN NEXT WEEK FOR CHARLIE CHAN THEATRE...
DO NOT DISTURB
The End
MAYBE IT'S ON VIDEOTAPE.
MEOWR?


ONE GUARD? YOU EXPECT ONE GUARD TO SCARE OFF THE ROGUE, MISS MAYS?
ONE GUARD BACKED UP BY OUR ARGUS VIDEOCAM SYSTEM IS WORTH A DOZEN MEN ON FOOT, MR. TRASK. OF COURSE, WE DO OFFER MORE EXPENSIVE SECURITY PLANS, MR. BLAKEMORE...
NO, MISS MAYS.
...THE ROGUE HAS NO HISTORY OF VIOLENCE, AND ALWAYS ROBS PAINTINGS THAT ARE UN-GUARDED. I'M SURE MR. McDONNELL AND HIS GUARDS WILL BE MORE THAN SUFFICIENT TO "SCARE HIM OFF."
I DON'T THINK YOU NEED TO WORRY, SIR.
I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT, BUT--EXCUSE ME.
CLARISSE? CLARISSE DEAR, IS THAT YOU?
ER... IF IT'S ABOUT THAT BACK ALIMONY, CLAIRE, I SWEAR AFTER THIS SHOW, I'LL--
ANYONE I SHOULD KNOW, MR. BLAKEMORE?
HELLO, ROALD, DARLING. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE HERE. IT'S BEEN AGES!
DON'T BE SILLY, ROALD. I TRUST YOU IMPLICITLY.
RO'S EX-WIFE, CLARISSA WHYTE-MORGAN. I ALWAYS THOUGHT IT A SHAME THEY BROKE UP. SHE INSPIRED MANY OF HIS GREAT WORKS, YOU KNOW.
OH, THERE YOU ARE, GABE. THANKS AGAIN FOR BRINGING IN THAT REPORT ON THE ROGUE.
YOU THINK HE'S GOING TO TRY TO STEAL THIS? THIS ISN'T ART, JEN--NO ONE'S DONE ART IN THIS COUNTRY FOR 40 YEARS NOW.


I KNOW, YOU HAVE A THREE-YEAR-OLD NIECE WHO CAN PAINT BETTER, RIGHT?
I WON'T SAY THAT--BUT I WILL SAY THAT THE BEST-LOOKING THING IN THAT GALLERY WAS YOU.
FLATTERER.
ER... LOOK, JEN, IF YOU'RE FREE TONIGHT, I WAS THINKING WE MIGHT HAVE DINNER...
I HAVE TO ATTEND THE OPENING OF THE TRASK EXHIBIT TONIGHT. "SHOW THE FLAG," SO TO SPEAK...
...BUT WHY DON'T YOU ESCORT ME, AND WE'LL GO SOMEPLACE LATER?
GREAT. WHAT'S THE UNIFORM OF THE DAY, BLACK TIE?
THE BLACKEST. SEE YOU AT EIGHT.
RATES
DO YOU THINK HE'S HERE, TEN? THE ROGUE, I MEAN?
NO WAY OF TELLING, GABE, BUT I DOUBT IT.
ON DUTY
GOD, WOULD I LIKE TO NAIL HIM. I COULD PRACTICALLY WRITE MY OWN BOOK CONTRACT.
ACCORDING TO YOUR OWN RESEARCH, HE SPECIALIZES IN ROBBING PRIVATE COLLECTORS, NOT GALLERIES, SO I THINK THE LITERARY WORLD WILL HAVE TO WAIT.
BUT AT LEAST THE EVENING WON'T BE A TOTAL LOSS. YOU LOOK VERY HANDSOME.
THANKS; THIS IS MY FAVORITE TUX, TOO...
TUXEDO RENTAL

EVERYTHING OKAY, McDONNELL?
JUST FINE, MA'AM. NO TROUBLE AT ALL.
"MY FRIENDS AND HONORED GUESTS...
...THANK YOU FOR COMING HERE TO VIEW MY NEW COLLECTION-- I HOPE YOU ENJOY IT.
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
"OH, I'M SURE I SHALL, ROALD DEAR...
...IN FACT, IT WILL BE A POSITIVE ORDEAL TO PART WITH THEM-- BUT UNTIL YOU'VE PAID ME THE ALIMONY YOU OWE ME, THEY'RE MINE.
NO ONE IS TAKING THESE PAINTINGS, CLARISSE. NOT YOU, AND NOT--
EASY, RO...
CLAIRE, WHAT? YOU CAN'T--
OH, NO? FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS I LIVED ON NOTHING, WORKING TO BUY SUPPLIES FOR YOU, STRETCHING YOUR CANVASES AND FRAMING THEM BY HAND--I'VE EARNED A PIECE OF YOUR SUCCESS, AND I MEAN TO HAVE IT!
THE LAW SAYS I CAN, DEAR, UNTIL YOU PAY WHAT YOU OWE-- AND THAT'S A LOT.
LIKE HELL!

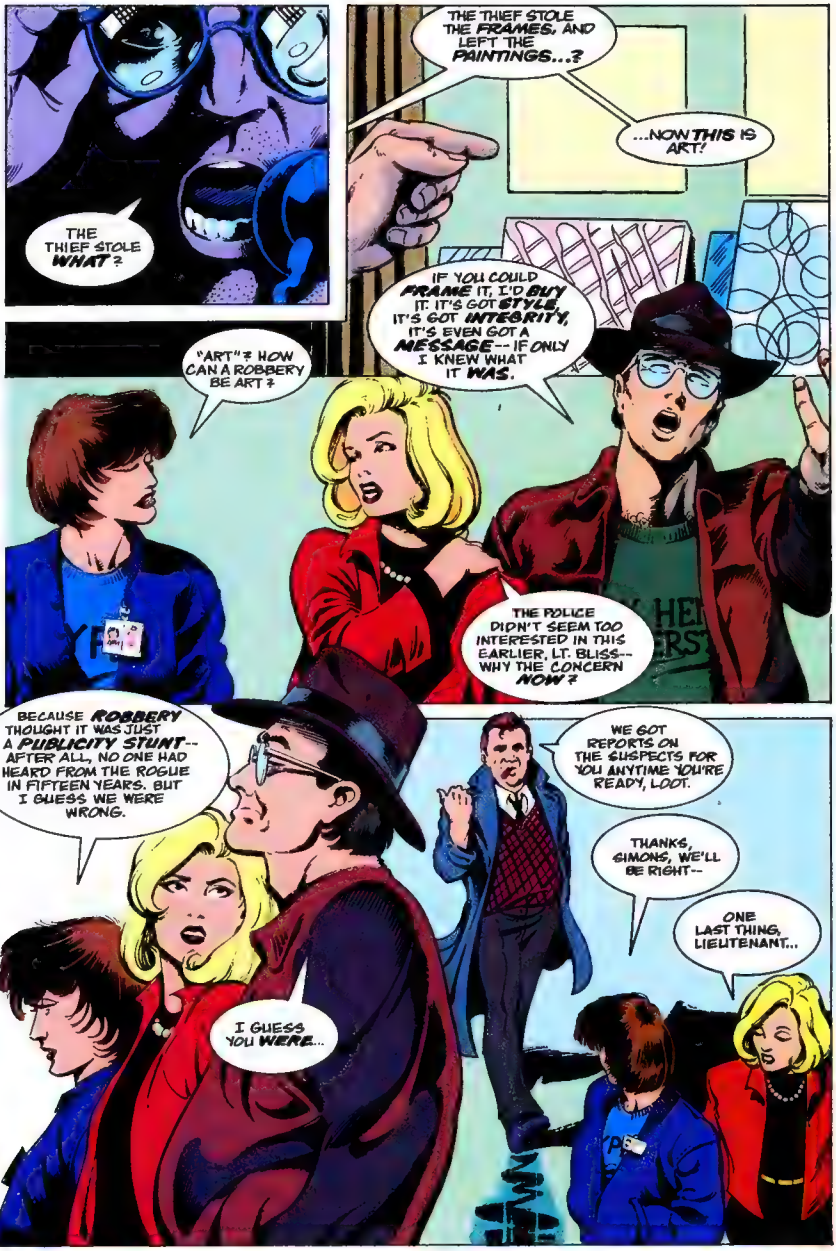

THERE'S NO NEED TO ACT LIKE CHILDREN ABOUT THIS; IT CAN WAIT UNTIL TOMORROW. BELIEVE ME, THOSE PAINTINGS AREN'T GOING ANYWHERE.
I AGREE. BREAKFAST, CLAIRE?
BRING YOUR LAWYER.
GOD, THAT'S SAD. TWO PEOPLE WHO USED TO LOVE EACH OTHER, AND NOW THEY'RE FIGHTING LIKE WORST ENEMIES.
I KNOW...
...REMINDS ME OF MY PARENTS.
"MISS MAYS? MISS MAYS--!
DID YOU HEAR HER? SHE VIRTUALLY THREATENED TO TAKE MY PAINTINGS! YOU'VE GOT TO STOP HER!
SHE'S TRYING TO TAKE YOUR PAINTINGS LEGALLY, MR. TRASK. ALL I CAN DO IS TRY TO STOP ANY THIEF.
LISTEN TO HER, RO...!
GUARD THOSE PAINTINGS WITH YOUR LIFE, MCDONNELL. I WANT TO KNOW IF ANYONE SETS FOOT IN THIS GALLERY TONIGHT -- DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
OOPS
YES, MA'AM... BUT IT SEEMS LIKE A LOT OF EFFORT FOR SOMETHING THAT LOOKS LIKE IT WAS PAINTED BY MY KID!
WE'LL GO TO MY LAWYER, SEE WHAT WE CAN DO TO STOP HER! DON'T WORRY, IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT...
SHE CAN'T DO IT, WINSTON... SHE CAN'T...!

NOW I'M OFF DUTY--FINALLY. MIND IF I RECOMMEND A RESTAURANT, GABE? THEY HAVE DANCING, TOO.
YOU LEAD AND I'LL FOLLOW--UNTIL WE GET TO THE DANCE FLOOR.
" HEY, THIS IS A NICE PLACE. AND THE SERVICE IS GREAT, TOO. "
" IT HAD BETTER BE. I OWN IT. "
OH, YEAH? PART OF YOUR MYSTERIOUS PAST, EH?
IT'S A KIND OF TAX SHELTER, NAMED AFTER MY FIRST BIG CASE. MAYBE I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT, SOMEDAY.
I'D LIKE TO HEAR IT, IN FACT, I'D LIKE TO HEAR ALMOST ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR PAST.
WE'LL SEE...
I HAD A GREAT TIME, JEN, THANK YOU...
...CAN I COME IN FOR A WHILE?
I DON'T THINK SO, GABE.
JEN, HAVE I DONE SOMETHING WRONG? AFTER LAST WEEK, I THOUGHT WE--
I LIKE YOU, GABE... IT'S JUST THAT EVERYTHING HAPPENED SO FAST... AFTER ARTHUR...

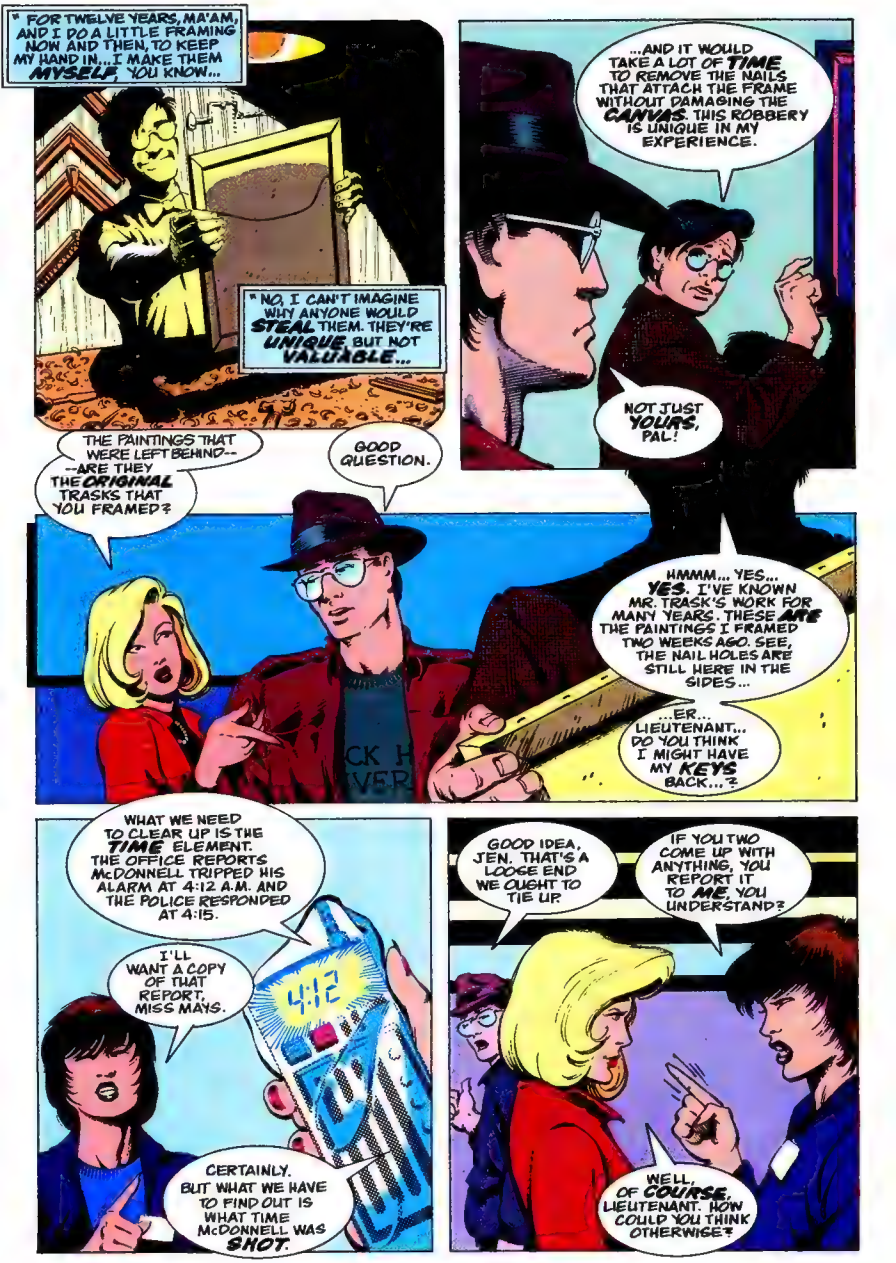
...I NEED SOME TIME... CAN YOU GIVE ME THAT?
YEAH... I THINK SO...
GOOD.
SWEET DREAMS.
BLAKEMORE GALLERY
MAZE
?

BANG BANG
UNHHH
4:12 AM
4:12 AM

BRRING
YES?
GOD-- WHAT HOSPITAL?
I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
BEEP BEEP BEEP
BRRING
LOOK, IF THIS IS THE OLD LADY DOWNSTAIRS--
OH, HI, JEN...
...WHAT...?
REAL TRUE DETECTIVE


THE THIEF STOLE WHAT?
THE THIEF STOLE THE FRAMES, AND LEFT THE PAINTINGS...?
...NOW THIS IS ART!
IF YOU COULD FRAME IT, I'D BUY IT. IT'S GOT STYLE, IT'S GOT INTEGRITY, IT'S EVEN GOT A MESSAGE-- IF ONLY I KNEW WHAT IT WAS.
"ART"? HOW CAN A ROBBERY BE ART?
THE POLICE DIDN'T SEEM TOO INTERESTED IN THIS EARLIER, LT. BLISS-- WHY THE CONCERN NOW?
BECAUSE ROBBERY THOUGHT IT WAS JUST A PUBLICITY STUNT-- AFTER ALL, NO ONE HAD HEARD FROM THE ROGUE IN FIFTEEN YEARS. BUT I GUESS WE WERE WRONG.
WE GOT REPORTS ON THE SUSPECTS FOR YOU ANYTIME YOU'RE READY, LOOT.
THANKS, SIMONS, WE'LL BE RIGHT--
ONE LAST THING, LIEUTENANT...
I GUESS YOU WERE...

I JUST WANTED TO CONGRATULATE YOU AND SERGEANT SIMONS ON YOUR PROMOTIONS. GOOD LUCK.
THANK YOU, MISS MAYS... I'M ONLY SORRY WE GOT THEM THE WAY WE DID.
YEAH... ARTHUR DROGAN WAS ONE STAND-UP GUY.
HOW DID THE THIEF GET PAST THE ALARM?
HE CUT THE POWER CABLE OUTSIDE. HE GOT IN BY USING THESE KEYS. THEY'VE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS STOLEN FROM A MR. JORKINS, WHO WORKS HERE.
I'D LIKE TO SPEAK TO HIM, LIEUTENANT.
"ANY ALIBIS, SERGEANT?"
"NOPE. WHICHEVER ONE PULLED THIS, HE MUST'VE THOUGHT IT WOULD LOOK MORE NATURAL IF HE DIDN'T HAVE ONE -- AND AT 4:00 A.M., I AGREE."
GOD, I ALMOST LOST THEM...
THIS IS JORKINS, LOOT.
ANY LUCK ON THE GUN?
A .45 AUTOMATIC, THE LAB SAYS. IF WE CAN FIND IT, WE CAN MATCH IT TO THE BULLET, BUT--
GO AHEAD, MISS MAYS.
MR. JORKINS, YOU AUTHENTICATE PAINTINGS FOR MR. BLAKEMORE, DON'T YOU?


" FOR TWELVE YEARS, MA'AM, AND I DO A LITTLE FRAMING NOW AND THEN, TO KEEP MY HAND IN... I MAKE THEM MYSELF, YOU KNOW...
" NO, I CAN'T IMAGINE WHY ANYONE WOULD STEAL THEM. THEY'RE UNIQUE, BUT NOT VALUABLE...
...AND IT WOULD TAKE A LOT OF TIME TO REMOVE THE NAILS THAT ATTACH THE FRAME WITHOUT DAMAGING THE CANVAS. THIS ROBBERY IS UNIQUE IN MY EXPERIENCE.
NOT JUST YOURS, PAL!
THE PAINTINGS THAT WERE LEFT BEHIND-- --ARE THEY THE ORIGINAL TRASKS THAT YOU FRAMED?
GOOD QUESTION.
HMMM... YES... YES. I'VE KNOWN MR. TRASK'S WORK FOR MANY YEARS. THESE ARE THE PAINTINGS I FRAMED TWO WEEKS AGO. SEE, THE NAIL HOLES ARE STILL HERE IN THE SIDES...
...ER... LIEUTENANT... DO YOU THINK I MIGHT HAVE MY KEYS BACK...?
WHAT WE NEED TO CLEAR UP IS THE TIME ELEMENT. THE OFFICE REPORTS McDONNELL TRIPPED HIS ALARM AT 4:12 A.M. AND THE POLICE RESPONDED AT 4:15.
I'LL WANT A COPY OF THAT REPORT, MISS MAYS.
4:12
4:12
CERTAINLY. BUT WHAT WE HAVE TO FIND OUT IS WHAT TIME McDONNELL WAS SHOT.
GOOD IDEA, J'EN. THAT'S A LOOSE END WE OUGHT TO TIE UP.
IF YOU TWO COME UP WITH ANYTHING, YOU REPORT IT TO ME, YOU UNDERSTAND?
WELL, OF COURSE, LIEUTENANT. HOW COULD YOU THINK OTHERWISE?

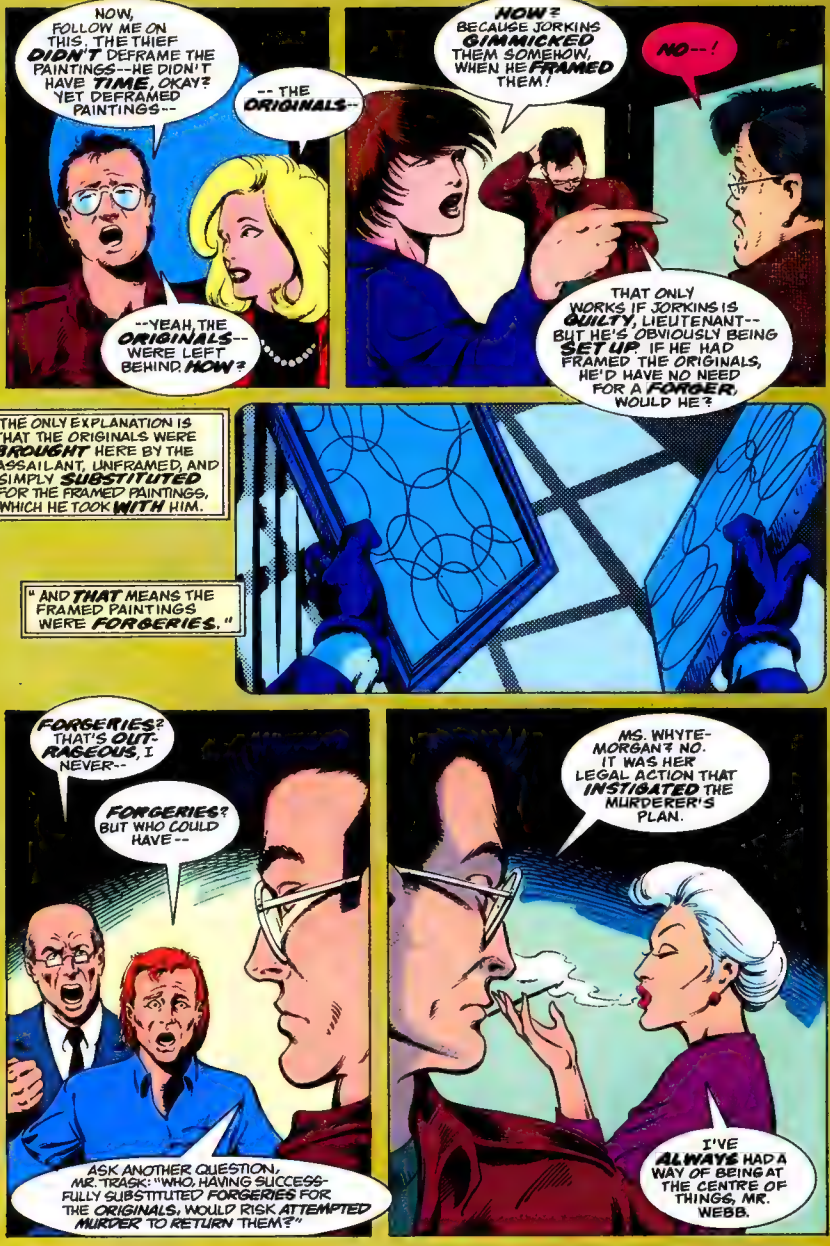
I DIDN'T WANT TO SAY ANYTHING IN FRONT OF BLISS, BUT I HAVE A THEORY I WANT TO BOUNCE OFF YOU, JEN...
TELL ME-- I'D RATHER THINK ABOUT ANYTHING INSTEAD OF WHAT'S NEXT...
THEY -- SNIF -- DON'T KNOW IF HE'LL PULL THROUGH OR NOT, MISS MAYS... TH-THIS SOUNDS AWFUL, BUT DO YOU KNOW IF HIS MEDICAL PLAN...?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT, MRS. McDONNELL. IT'S TAKEN CARE OF.
"BUT TELL ME, DID HE SAY ANYTHING? TO YOU OR-- "
"THE DOCTORS DON'T KNOW IF HE'S COME TO SINCE HE WAS SHOT. THEY DON'T KNOW IF HE'LL... IF HE'LL EVER...
"I'M SORRY, MISS MAYS..."
NOT AT ALL. YOU STAY AS LONG AS YOU LIKE. TRY TO GET SOME REST.
... TELL ME, DR. COLLINS, IS IT POSSIBLE THAT McDONNELL WAS SHOT, PASSED OUT, THEN REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS -- IF JUST LONG ENOUGH TO ACTIVATE AN ALARM-- SOMETIME LATER?
IT'S POSSIBLE, MISS MAYS... HE'S IN EXCELLENT CONDITION... BUT THE ONLY WAY OF KNOWING IS IF HE REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS AND TELLS US.

"I CERTAINLY WISH I KNEW HOW LONG McDONNELL WAS CUT. THAT WOULD TELL US HOW MUCH TIME THE THIEF HAD TO WORK ON THE PAINTINGS"
"I NOTICE YOU DIDN'T CALL HIM 'THE ROGUE.' YOU KNOW, JEN, NOTHING IN THE ROBBERY BEARS ANY RELATION TO THE ROGUE'S M.O. FOR ONE THING, HE NEVER USED VIOLENCE, REMEMBER...?
...IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK LIKE SOMEONE IS TRYING TO BLAME THIS ROBBERY ON HIM, DOESN'T IT?
MAYBE SO... BUT YOU STILL HAVEN'T EXPLAINED WHY WE'VE COME ALL THE WAY TO GREENWICH VILLAGE TO TALK TO THAT ART FORGER I USE AS AN INFORMANT NOW AND THEN...
I TOLD YOU, I'M WORKING ON A THEORY... BUT IT WON'T MEAN ZIP UNLESS McDONNELL PULLS THROUGH. CAN THIS FORGER DUPLICATE TRASK'S STYLE?
IF HE CAN'T, I GUARANTEE "DAUBER" MARX CAN FIND SOMEONE WHO CAN...
NO ANSWER TO THE BUZZER. LET'S TAKE A LOOK AROUND..
COMPARED TO THE OUTER DOOR, THIS ONE IS A BREEZE. HE USUALLY SLEEPS LATE. I WONDER WHY--?
DAUBER? DAUBER, IT'S JENNIFER MAYS, ARE YOU HERE?
NICE CLASS OF PEOPLE YOU KNOW, JENNIFER. WHO IS THIS GUY, "REMBRANDTS 'R' US"?
I GUESS HE'S OUT...

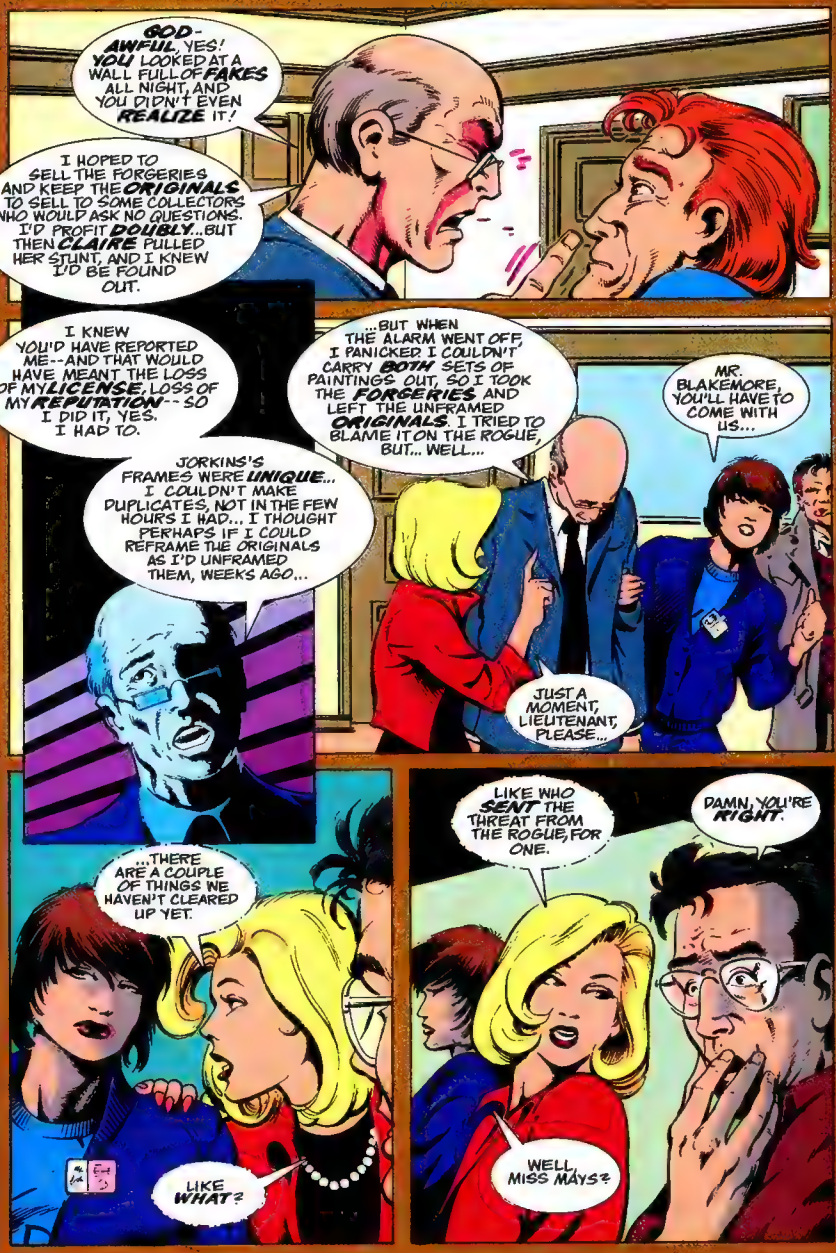
HOLY GOD!
GABE, GET DOWN...
BANG
SPWEEE
IF HE'S ANY KIND OF PROFESSIONAL, HE'S LONG GONE...
...BUT IF THE KILLER WANTS US TO THINK HE'S THE ROGUE, I'M SURE HE'S LEFT HIS CALLING CARD.
"AS I SAID, LIEUTENANT, WE HEARD SHOTS, THEN WE BROKE IN--"
"YEAH, RIGHT. AND HE GOT AWAY DOWN THE FIRE ESCAPE. BALLISTICS SAYS THE BULLETS ARE FROM THE SAME GUN THAT SHOT McDONNELL...
...BUT WHY WAS A FORGER KILLED WHEN THERE'S NO FORGERY INVOLVED?
MR. WEBB HAS A THEORY, WHICH HE'LL BE GLAD TO EXPLAIN...
HUH...?
THEORIES. I DON'T WANT TO KNOW FROM, BUT IF YOU HAVE ANY PROOF, YOU'D BETTER CALL. IN THE MEANTIME, I'M WORKING ON SOMETHING ON MY OWN.
BEEP BEEP BEEP
THAT MUST BE THE OFFICE FOR ME; DO YOU SEE A PHONE ANYWHERE AROUND HERE?

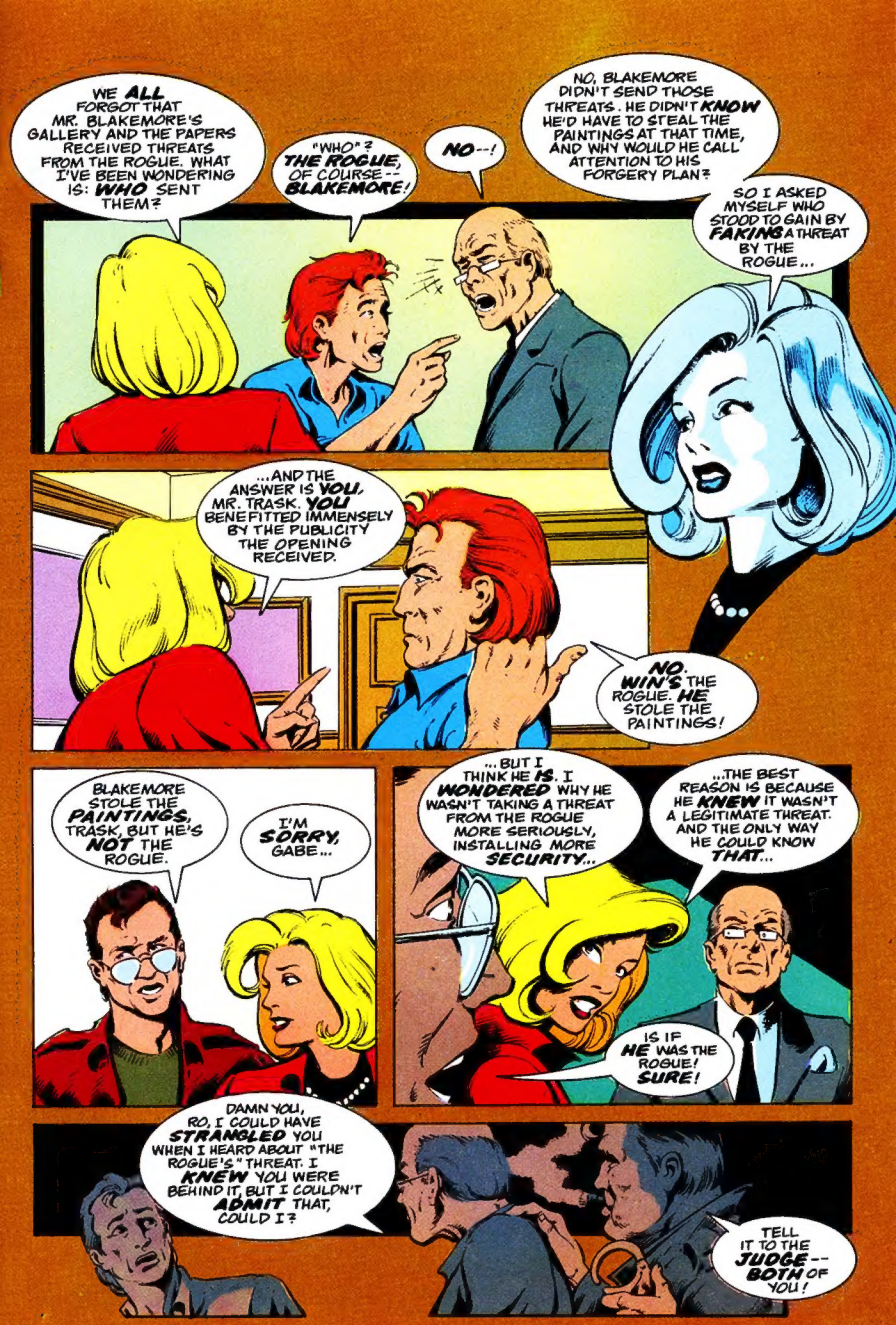
"MISS MAYS, THE HOSPITAL CALLED--McDONNELL'S REGAINING CONSCIOUSNESS."
HONEY, MISS MAYS IS HERE... SHE WANTS TO ASK YOU SOMETHING.
HELLO, McDONNELL...
HI, MISS MAYS...
...GUESS I BOMBED OUT ON THIS ONE, HUH?
YOU GOT SUCKER-PUNCHED, McDONNELL. DON'T WORRY. BUT I WANT YOU TO TELL ME SOMETHING...
...HOW MUCH TIME PASSED BEFORE YOU PRESSED THE ALARM? DID YOU PRESS IT IMMEDIATELY AFTER YOU WERE SHOT, OR DID YOU PASS OUT FIRST, THEN--?
NO... I PRESSED IT RIGHT AFTER I WAS SHOT... BEFORE PASSING OUT... DIDN'T KNOW IF I'D EVER WAKE UP... I REMEMBER, IT WAS 4:12...
...THE TIME KEN JUNIOR WAS BORN...
THANK YOU, MRS. McDONNELL... I THINK THE WORST IS OVER NOW...
THAT'S IT...! IT'S AS SIMPLE AS GRAVITY!
PAGING MISS JENNIFER MAYS...
NONE OF THEM HAVE AN ALIBI FOR THE MARX SHOOTING, BUT I THINK I'VE FOUND THE KEY TO THIS THING. I'LL BE BACK AT THE GALLERY IN HALF AN HOUR OR SO.
WE'LL BE THERE, LIEUTENANT... I WOULDN'T MISS IT FOR THE WORLD.
"FOUND THE KEY..." NO WAY! I KNOW SHE'S SNIFFING UP THE WRONG TRACK!
WELL, IF YOU'RE SO SURE SHE'S WRONG, WHY DON'T WE JUST GO GET BRUNCH?
ARE YOU KIDDING?

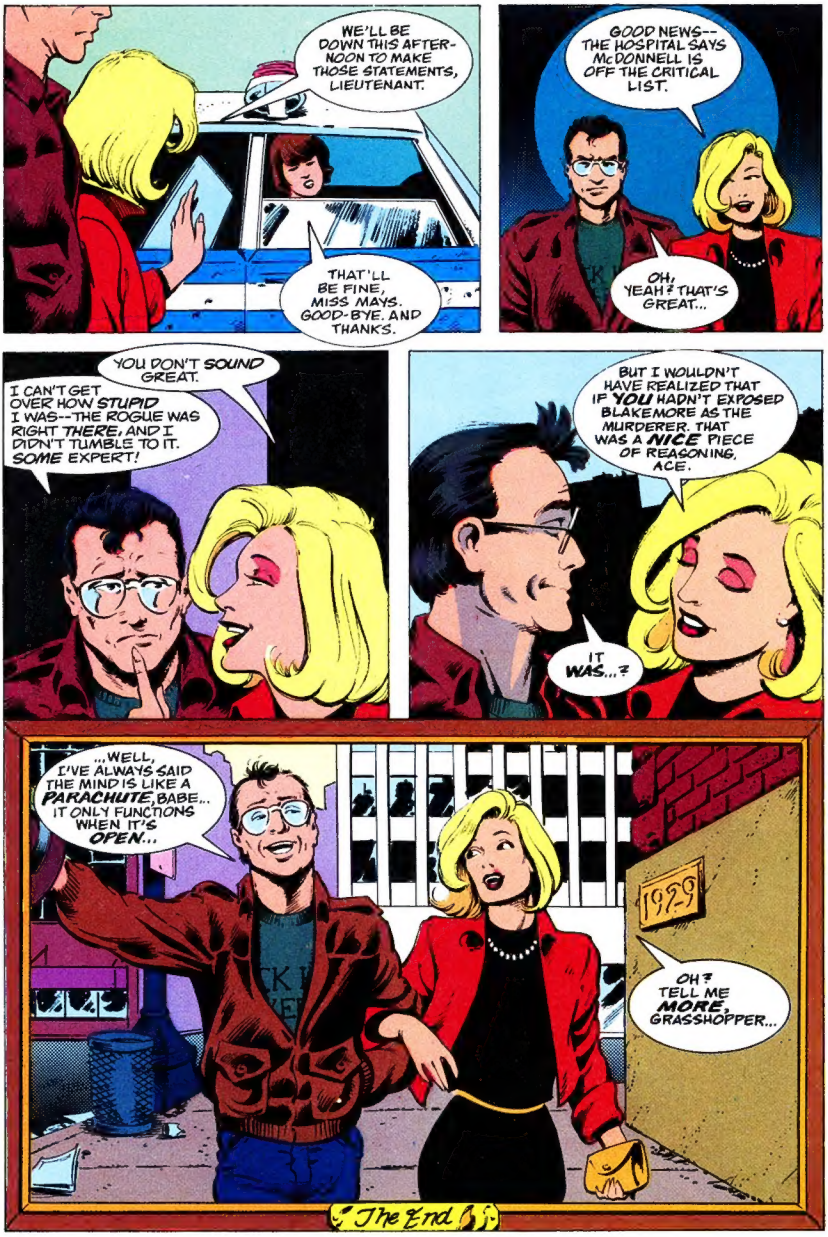
"IT'S STANDARD IN CASES LIKE THIS TO RUN THE NAMES OF THE PRINCIPALS THROUGH THE COMPUTER.
"EXCEPT FOR SOME TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS, MOST OF YOU CAME UP CLEAN...
BLAKEMORE GALLERY
"EXCEPT FOR YOU, JORKINS. YOU DID TIME FOR DRUG DEALING -- DRUGS YOU TRIED TO SMUGGLE IN THE FRAMES OF SOME PAINTINGS!
LIEUTENANT, THAT WAS YEARS AGO--!
MAYBE SO, BUT WE FOUND THIS HIDDEN IN YOUR APARTMENT-- NOT AN HOUR AGO! AND YOU CAN BET WE MADE IT AS THE GUN THAT SHOT McDONNELL AND THE FORGER, MARX!
I WANT TO SEE A LAWYER! THAT'S ALL I'LL SAY!
"UH... LIEUTENANT...?
CONSIDERING THE THEME OF THIS CASE, I DON'T THINK IT'S GOING TOO FAR TO SAY THAT MR. JORKINS HIMSELF IS BEING FRAMED. CAN I POINT OUT SOME STUFF TO YOU?
≥sigh≤ ALL RIGHT! MAKE IT QUICK!
IT WAS MS. WHYTE-MORGAN'S THREATENED LEGAL ACTION THAT PRECIPITATED ALL THIS. SHE THREATENED TO TAKE MR. TRASK'S PAINTINGS FOR BACK ALIMONY.
AND IF THAT HAPPENED, THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN EXAMINED TO ESTABLISH WORTH-- BUT SOMEBODY COULDN'T CHANCE THAT!
THE WHOLE THING HINGES ON TIME. IF ONLY THREE MINUTES ELAPSED BETWEEN THE ASSAULT ON McDONNELL AND THE ARRIVAL OF THE POLICE, THERE SIMPLY WASN'T ENOUGH TIME TO... ER... DEFRAME SIX PAINTINGS.


NOW, FOLLOW ME ON THIS. THE THIEF DIDN'T DEFRAME THE PAINTINGS--HE DIDN'T HAVE TIME, OKAY? YET DEFRAMED PAINTINGS--
-- THE ORIGINALS--
--YEAH, THE ORIGINALS-- WERE LEFT BEHIND. HOW?
HOW? BECAUSE JORKINS GIMMICKED THEM SOMEHOW, WHEN HE FRAMED THEM!
NO--!
THAT ONLY WORKS IF JORKINS IS GUILTY, LIEUTENANT-- BUT HE'S OBVIOUSLY BEING SET UP. IF HE HAD FRAMED THE ORIGINALS, HE'D HAVE NO NEED FOR A FORGER, WOULD HE?
"THE ONLY EXPLANATION IS THAT THE ORIGINALS WERE BROUGHT HERE BY THE ASSAILANT, UNFRAMED, AND SIMPLY SUBSTITUTED FOR THE FRAMED PAINTINGS, WHICH HE TOOK WITH HIM.
" AND THAT MEANS THE FRAMED PAINTINGS WERE FORGERIES."
FORGERIES? THAT'S OUT-RAGEOUS, I NEVER--
FORGERIES? BUT WHO COULD HAVE --
ASK ANOTHER QUESTION, MR. TRASK: "WHO, HAVING SUCCESS-FULLY SUBSTITUTED FORGERIES FOR THE ORIGINALS, WOULD RISK ATTEMPTED MURDER TO RETURN THEM?"
MS. WHYTE-MORGAN? NO. IT WAS HER LEGAL ACTION THAT INSTIGATED THE MURDERER'S PLAN.
I'VE ALWAYS HAD A WAY OF BEING AT THE CENTRE OF THINGS, MR. WEBB.

MR. TRASK? NO. WHY WOULD HE SUBSTITUTE FORGERIES FOR HIS OWN ORIGINALS, AT AN EXHIBITION HE HOPED WOULD JUMP-START HIS CAREER?
YOU HAVE A DEVIOUS MIND, YOU KNOW THAT...?
YEAH.
BUT MR BLAKEMORE: YOU KNEW WHEN CLARISSE HAD THE PICTURES APPRAISED, THEY'D BE REVEALED AS THE FORGERIES YOU'D COMMISSIONED FROM "DAUBER" MARX, AND YOU COULDN'T TAKE THAT RISK.
THAT'S RIDICULOUS, I--
THEN YOU WON'T MIND IF LT. BLISS SEARCHES YOUR HOME AND WAREHOUSES. YOU COULDN'T HAVE TAKEN THE PICTURES VERY FAR; YOU HAD TO KILL THE FORGER AFTER ALL, AND FRAME JORKINS--
--AND THE FORGER HAD TO KNOW SOMETHING SHADY WAS UP; I'LL BET HE KEPT A RECORD SOMEWHERE.
DAMN IT, WIN, IS THIS TRUE?
OF COURSE NOT, RO. I HAD MARX MAKE COPIES, YES, BUT TO PROTECT US IN CASE THE ROGUE DID ROB THEM.
YOU HAD MY WORK COPIED? WITHOUT TELLING ME...?
NO, MR. BLAKEMORE. YOU LEARNED OF THE ROGUE'S THREAT ONLY HOURS BEFORE THE EXHIBITION. THE FAKES HAD TO HAVE BEEN MADE EARLIER!
:sigh: I GUESS THIS ISN'T GOING TO WORK.
RO, I WAS ALWAYS A CONTACT TO YOU, NOT A FRIEND, AND I HATED IT. I DON'T HEAR FROM YOU FOR TEN YEARS, THEN YOU POP UP, EXPECTING ME TO EXHIBIT THAT GOD-AWFUL WORK OF YOURS...
"GOD-AWFUL"?


GOD-AWFUL, YES! YOU LOOKED AT A WALL FULL OF FAKES ALL NIGHT, AND YOU DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE IT!
I HOPED TO SELL THE FORGERIES AND KEEP THE ORIGINALS TO SELL TO SOME COLLECTORS WHO WOULD ASK NO QUESTIONS. I'D PROFIT DOUBLY...BUT THEN CLAIRE PULLED HER STUNT, AND I KNEW I'D BE FOUND OUT.
I KNEW YOU'D HAVE REPORTED ME--AND THAT WOULD HAVE MEANT THE LOSS OF MY LICENSE, LOSS OF MY REPUTATION--SO I DID IT, YES. I HAD TO.
JORKINS'S FRAMES WERE UNIQUE... I COULDN'T MAKE DUPLICATES, NOT IN THE FEW HOURS I HAD... I THOUGHT PERHAPS IF I COULD REFRAME THE ORIGINALS AS I'D UNFRAMED THEM, WEEKS AGO...
...BUT WHEN THE ALARM WENT OFF, I PANICKED. I COULDN'T CARRY BOTH SETS OF PAINTINGS OUT, SO I TOOK THE FORGERIES AND LEFT THE UNFRAMED ORIGINALS. I TRIED TO BLAME IT ON THE ROGUE, BUT... WELL...
MR. BLAKEMORE, YOU'LL HAVE TO COME WITH US...
JUST A MOMENT, LIEUTENANT, PLEASE...
...THERE ARE A COUPLE OF THINGS WE HAVEN'T CLEARED UP YET.
LIKE WHAT?
LIKE WHO SENT THE THREAT FROM THE ROGUE, FOR ONE.
DAMN, YOU'RE RIGHT.
WELL, MISS MAYS?


WE ALL FORGOT THAT MR. BLAKEMORE'S GALLERY AND THE PAPERS RECEIVED THREATS FROM THE ROGUE. WHAT I'VE BEEN WONDERING IS: WHO SENT THEM?
"WHO"? THE ROGUE, OF COURSE -- BLAKEMORE!
NO--!
NO, BLAKEMORE DIDN'T SEND THOSE THREATS. HE DIDN'T KNOW HE'D HAVE TO STEAL THE PAINTINGS AT THAT TIME, AND WHY WOULD HE CALL ATTENTION TO HIS FORGERY PLAN?
SO I ASKED MYSELF WHO STOOD TO GAIN BY FAKING A THREAT BY THE ROGUE...
...AND THE ANSWER IS YOU, MR. TRASK. YOU BENEFITTED IMMENSELY BY THE PUBLICITY THE OPENING RECEIVED.
NO, WIN'S THE ROGUE. HE STOLE THE PAINTINGS!
BLAKEMORE STOLE THE PAINTINGS, TRASK, BUT HE'S NOT THE ROGUE.
I'M SORRY, GABE...
...BUT I THINK HE IS. I WONDERED WHY HE WASN'T TAKING A THREAT FROM THE ROGUE MORE SERIOUSLY, INSTALLING MORE SECURITY...
...THE BEST REASON IS BECAUSE HE KNEW IT WASN'T A LEGITIMATE THREAT. AND THE ONLY WAY HE COULD KNOW THAT...
IS IF HE WAS THE ROGUE! SURE!
DAMN YOU, RO, I COULD HAVE STRANGLED YOU WHEN I HEARD ABOUT "THE ROGUE'S" THREAT. I KNEW YOU WERE BEHIND IT, BUT I COULDN'T ADMIT THAT, COULD I?
TELL IT TO THE JUDGE -- BOTH OF YOU!


WE'LL BE DOWN THIS AFTERNOON TO MAKE THOSE STATEMENTS, LIEUTENANT.
THAT'LL BE FINE, MISS MAYS. GOOD-BYE. AND THANKS.
GOOD NEWS--THE HOSPITAL SAYS McDONNELL IS OFF THE CRITICAL LIST.
OH, YEAH? THAT'S GREAT...
YOU DON'T SOUND GREAT.
I CAN'T GET OVER HOW STUPID I WAS--THE ROGUE WAS RIGHT THERE, AND I DIDN'T TUMBLE TO IT. SOME EXPERT!
BUT I WOULDN'T HAVE REALIZED THAT IF YOU HADN'T EXPOSED BLAKEMORE AS THE MURDERER. THAT WAS A NICE PIECE OF REASONING, ACE.
IT WAS...?
...WELL, I'VE ALWAYS SAID THE MIND IS LIKE A PARACHUTE, BABE... IT ONLY FUNCTIONS WHEN IT'S OPEN...
1929
OH? TELL ME MORE, GRASSHOPPER...
The End

Welcome to *The MAZE Agency*, a new monthly comic book that I've had in mind for a long, long time.

Just how long is an interesting question all by itself, one that I'm not sure even I can answer. *MAZE* may have been conceived — so to speak — on a day back in September of 1967, twenty-one long years ago. On that day, I, a high-school freshman, wandered into a local book store while on my lunch hour, accompanied by some friends. As was the usual custom with us, we began rooting around the racks, looking for something to read. One of my friends was an avid science-fiction fan, but I was never really able to embrace the genre, despite a wide reading of Heinlein's "juvenile" science-fiction novels when I was a kid, despite a childhood in which not one month passed without partaking of the delights of adventurer Adam Strange (the creation of writer Gardner Fox) in the pages of DC's *Mystery In Space* (more on this later), and DC's *Strange Adventures* comic, featuring stories scripted primarily by Fox and John Broome, creator of "The Atomic Knights."

What to read . . . what to read . . .? I scanned the shelves, finally taking in a paperback cover. *The Roman Hat Mystery* it read, *by Ellery Queen*.

Hmm. I was familiar with at least the trappings of the detective genre, of course — my mother was an avid fan of the television incarnation of *Perry Mason* — yet I had never done any real reading in it, aside from the occasional Sherlock Holmes story, which no kid's childhood is complete without. I had already for a couple of years been a fan of *The Saint*, "The Robin Hood of Modern Crime," created by Leslie Charteris, but The Saint was more of an adventurer than a detective — though if you call this splitting hairs, I'll readily agree. I bought the paperback and thoroughly enjoyed it. I had never before encountered the type of fair-play whodunit fashioned by Ellery Queen (in reality, two cousins, Manfred B. Lee and Frederic Dannay), and readily fell into the spirit of its rigorously exacting (sometimes exasperatingly so) logical structure. Most mysteries I had known of had emphasized action rather than plot. I eagerly sopped up every Queen novel I could find (to my delight, there were thirty-five, and several volumes of short stories), and used them as a jumping-off point to other greats of detective fiction — Rex Stout, Margery Allingham, Anthony Boucher, and many others — and began reading the history and critical studies of the genre as well. And from square one, I wondered why there weren't comic books that contained this type of story, too (more on this in future columns).

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and I began writing detective stories, regularly mailing them out to *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* (edited by the aforementioned Frederic Dannay), and, just as regularly, getting them back, rejected. "Sorry, but please, try again." Finally, in 1973, I made my first professional sale, a story which appeared in the May 1973 issue of *EQMM*, entitled "Crime At the Comiconvention."(**Rule #1:** Write what you know.) This little epic introduced to a not-exactly waiting public the detective duo of Karen Ashwin, head of Ashwin Investigations, Inc. of New York City, and her boyfriend and co-worker, Gardner Frost (see above note as to the relationship of imitation and flattery). I sold one more story about Karen and Gardner, this one to the September 4, 1977 issue of *The Beacon Magazine*, the Sunday magazine supplement of my hometown paper, *The Akron Beacon Journal*. (**Rule #2:** Write where you know.)

Around about that time, I took a staff job at DC Comics. I began writing as much as I could (and in those post-implosion days, there wasn't much), mostly mystery stories, but of the supernatural, rather than the ratiocinative, variety. I still hadn't forgotten my ambition to write a straight detective comic someday, though. "Straight," as used here, refers not to sexual orientation but to a "pure" detective comic, unsullied by any intrusive elements like capes, masks, superpowers, etc. I mean, I'm the biggest Batman fan there is, but even his detective exploits are quite clearly action/adventure/super-hero stories first and detective stories second. During my youth (well, my *early* youth), the Adam Strange stories, as well as most stories in *Strange Adventures*, were the closest things available to fair-play whodunits in that they were *problem-solving* stories in which the heroes — there were heroes in comics in those days — used their wits to solve a dilemma. Sure, there were lots of interesting monsters on the planet Rann — grandly illustrated by penciller Carmine Infantino — but it was the *plots* that made those stories click, not the action. At an early age, Adam Strange became my first hero.

Unfortunately, there was no interest expressed by either DC or Marvel in a series that wasn't replete with capes and masks.

Then came the advent (in the early eighties) of the so-called "independents," new, smaller publishers. It was in an early issue of *Eclipse Magazine* that I first saw a strip named *Ms. Tree*. Created by Max Allan Collins and Terry Beatty, it was a thoroughly hardboiled detective strip, beholden far more to the novels of Mickey Spillane and his creation, Mike Hammer, than to the Krypton of Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. Well, if there was room for a hardboiled detective comic strip, there was certainly room for a detective comic strip that covered one of the other major subgenres of detection, the whodunit, right?

Thus, several years later, we have *The MAZE Agency*. *MAZE*, to quote my own copy from last year's *Comico Black Book*, ". . . is the story of the relationship of two people, and their interest in their mutual occupation — the study and detection of crime." Future issues of *MAZE* will shed some light on the relationship of private detective Jennifer Mays, owner of The MAZE Agency, and Gabriel Webb, true-crime writer and amateur sleuth, as well, it is hoped, as provide for your enjoyment a number of intriguing whodunits which you can solve — if you know where to look for the clues. John Dickson Carr calls the fair-play whodunit "the grandest game in the world," and, after twenty-one years of reading them, I heartily agree. Current plans call for at least the first year of *MAZE* to be one-issue stories, complete in themselves.

If your favorite phrase in the English language is "I know who the murderer is," *be here*. And don't forget your deerstalker cap.

**BACKSTORY**

*Warning:* **Read this issue first before reading *Backstory*.**

**This section will concern itself with details that bear on the issue's story, but have no real place in the narrative itself. "The Adventure of the Rogue's Gallery," like a lot of stories you'll read in *MAZE*, began life as a prose story written in the early seventies, and was rejected by *EQMM* and every other detective story market. (Hey, there's a recommendation! That's why I wanted you to read this *after* you read the story!) This version, however, is lots better than the text version — *lots* better. Hope you agree.**

**— Mike W. Barr**

NEXT ISSUE:
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